

# RESOURCES

NATURE, HISTORY AND HORTICULTURE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

VOLUME 5, NO. 1 WINTER 2005

## STARRY NIGHTS—A Natural Resource

By Jim Pomeroy, Manager, Hidden Pond Nature Center

It's the 19th century. All alone at night, you're taking the long journey from the city of Fairfax to the township of Occoquan. It's a difficult, even dangerous undertaking.

Unless you knew the way well, the trip would be almost impossible in the near total darkness of a moonless night. The road would have been rutted, muddy at least half of the year, and there was always the threat of being robbed. With few if any road signs and houses far apart and all dark, just about the only thing to bring comfort would have been a true nighttime resource — the sky.

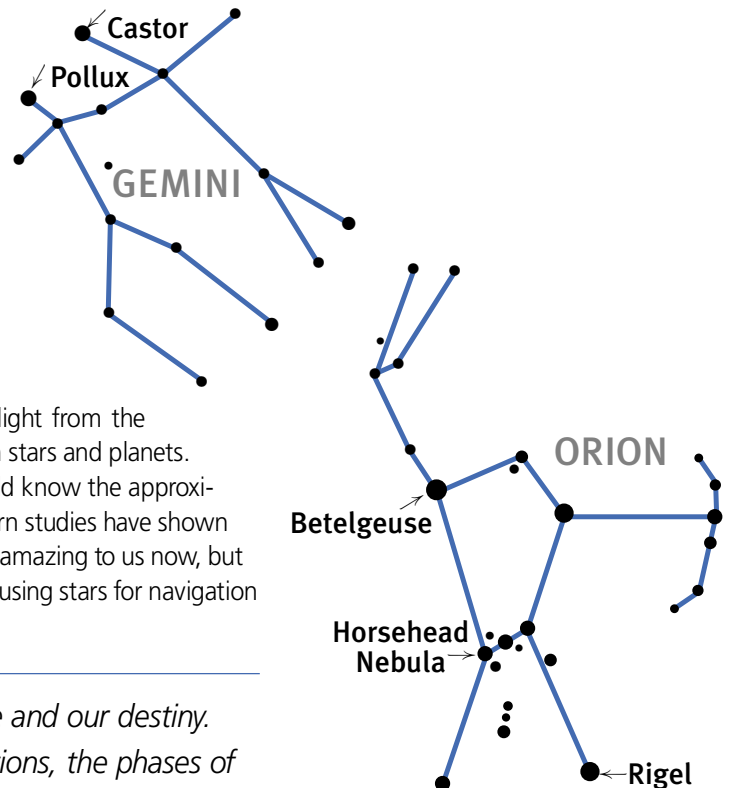
And what a starry sky it must have been! With no competing light from the ground, and no smog, the heavens would have appeared packed with stars and planets. With a glance at the sky, folks used to being outdoors after dark would know the approximate time of night it was and which direction they were facing. Modern studies have shown that night-migrating birds use the stars for navigation. That may seem amazing to us now, but only because we have become so removed from the night sky. Fact is, using stars for navigation is probably easier than using rivers, coastlines or mountain ranges.

*We too can gaze upon the stars and ponder our place and our destiny.  
To watch the heavenly bodies and understand their motions, the phases of  
the moon, the motion of the earth — is to truly feel the earth move under  
your feet. However, to experience this, we do have to actually see the stars.*

### Becoming Reacquainted with the Sky

Winter is a good time to become reacquainted with the visible universe. It gets dark earlier, the constellations are more striking in winter, and the air is clearer. It is a paradox that even though science has given us a far greater (though still, oh, so incomplete) understanding of what we are looking at, few of us have the opportunity now to really see the stars as our ancestors did. Still, with warm clothes and a blanket, a pair of binoculars, and a lounge chair, we can once again appreciate at least a part of the wondrous sky overhead.

By mid-December at 9 pm, we find Orion the Hunter, perhaps the most recognized of all the constellations, midway up the southeast sky. Orion's eastern shoulder is marked by the red supergiant star Betelgeuse. Marking his western knee is the bluish-white giant Rigel. In the northeast, we find the Gemini twins Castor and Pollux. The two normally look like a pair of cold eyes staring down at us, but this winter, they are joined by the planet Saturn.



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## WINTER CELEBRATIONS

*The Holidays may be over,  
but winter celebrations have just begun!*

**Burke Lake Park**  
7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station  
Call 703-323-6600

**Colvin Run Mill**  
10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls  
Call 703-759-2771

**Ellanor C. Lawrence Park**  
5040 Walney Road, Chantilly  
Call 703-631-0013

**Frying Pan Park**  
2709 West Ox Road, Herndon  
Call 703-437-9101

**Green Spring Gardens Park**  
4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria  
Call 703-642-5173

**Hidden Oaks Nature Center**  
7701 Royce Street, Annandale  
Call 703-941-1065

**Hidden Pond Nature Center**  
8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield  
Call 703-451-9588

**Huntley Meadows Park**  
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria  
Call 703-768-2525

**Lake Accotink Park**  
7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield  
Call 703-569-3464

**Lake Fairfax Park**  
1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston  
Call 703-471-5414

**Riverbend Park**  
8700 Potomac Hills Street  
Great Falls  
Call 703-759-9018

**Sully Historic Site**  
Sully Road, Chantilly  
Call 703-437-1794

*Need directions or  
more information?*

**VISIT**

**[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks)**

### **Equal Access/ Special Accommodations**

The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services. Special accommodations will be provided upon request. Please call the ADA/Access coordinator at **703-324-8563**, at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed.

**ADA/Access Coordinator**  
**703-324-8563**

**TTY 703-803-3354**

**[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm)**

### **Groundhogs and Other Weather Predictors Celebration**

**HIDDEN OAKS NATURE CENTER**

**Sunday, January 30th, 1-2:00 pm**

Bring the little ones to prepare for Groundhog's Day with Willard the Groundhog and other famous weather predictors. Enjoy costumed characters, a slide show, crafts, plus a trip outside with Willard to look for his shadow. \$3/child, \$1/adult. **703-941-1065**.

### **Maple Syrup Boil Down**

**COLVIN RUN MILL**

**Sunday, February 13th, Noon-2:00 pm**

The sap is rising, and the maple trees are tapped. Come February, it's sugaring time! Watch and learn as sap is boiled down into sweet syrup over an open fire. Sample the delicious combination of maple syrup over fresh baked cornbread. FREE. **703-759-2771**.



### **Sky Watching: Warriors and Beasts**

**RIVERBEND PARK VISITOR CENTER**

**Thursday, February 10th, 6:30-7:30 pm**

The dark skies over the Potomac River bring out the stars. Navigate through the night sky in search of great warriors and beasts. Listen to a few of their stories. Afterwards, we'll view some celestial objects through telescopes. Reservations and advanced payment required. Cloud date 2/17. \$3/person. **703-759-9018**.

### **Clean Air Partners Honors Park Authority**

At its November awards ceremony, Clean Air Partners (a nonprofit education program serving metro Washington, DC) recognized the Fairfax County Park Authority with an Honorable Mention for turning its commitment to cleaner air into action. Clean Air Partners cited the Park Authority's ban on the use of gasoline powered lawn and garden equipment, bans on the use of certain paints and pesticides containing VOCs (volatile organic compounds), and bans on the refueling of non-essential gasoline-powered vehicles on Code Red days, as well as purchasing lower-emissions lawn and garden equipment.

Clean Air Partners recognizes regional businesses, organizations, government agencies, and media sources that have made outstanding efforts to decrease ground-level ozone and increase awareness of the hazards of ozone during the 2004 season. (To learn more, go to [www.cleanairpartners.net](http://www.cleanairpartners.net))



### **Are You New to Fairfax County?**

Discover our area's beautiful forests, gardens and historical sites. What better way to enjoy our county's rich history and natural resources? When you visit our county parks, you become part of them and begin your own family history in Northern Virginia.

#### **What's RMD?**

RMD stands for Resource Management Division. It is the part of the Park Authority responsible for natural, historical and horticultural resources.

## RESOURCES

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Photos: Don Sweeney

Administration: Linda Crone

Production: Innovative Projects, Inc.

Published quarterly by the Fairfax County Park Authority, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035-1118. Available at park sites listed on the back cover and Fairfax County libraries.

Visit **ResOURces** online at  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources)

 **ResOURces** is printed on 100% recycled paper.



## Add the Spirit of Virginia's Heritage to Your Next Event



It's time to take advantage of eight charming historic properties that are available to rent for corporate and nonprofit meetings and events, or family celebrations such as reunions, birthdays, weddings and anniversaries. They're right here in Fairfax County! What an excellent way to add flair and atmosphere to your next event or celebration.

To rent an historic property or learn more, please call 703-938-8835 (TTY 703-750-2402), email [hprs@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:hprs@fairfaxcounty.gov), or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/weddings.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/weddings.htm)

## WERE YOU AN OUTDOORS KIND OF KID?

When you were little, did you love running around outside wild and happy with your friends? Did you love exploring the woods, tuned in to the bugs, trees and animals? Did you love telling stories around the campfire about days of yore? Was that a resounding YES?

Then you may be a natural-born park volunteer and/or heritage interpreter. When you volunteer, you join hundreds of dedicated (and fun!) folks who share your passion for nature and Virginia's rich history. Call your local park listed on page 2, or call/email the following Volunteer Coordinators:

### Volunteering

[erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov)

703-324-8750

### Interpretive Services

[mona.enquist-johnston@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mona.enquist-johnston@fairfaxcounty.gov)

703-324-8750

### Archaeology and Collections Cultural Resource Protection

[robert.wharton@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:robert.wharton@fairfaxcounty.gov)

703-534-3881

### Master Gardeners Program

[sandra.flowers@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:sandra.flowers@fairfaxcounty.gov)

703-941-7987

### VOLUNTEER WISH LIST

All of our nature centers and historic sites have an ongoing need for volunteers. So if you haven't been having enough FUN lately and would enjoy volunteering in the pleasant, soothing environment of the parks — this is a great way to get started. Call your closest site directly (see p. 2), or contact [erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov) (703-324-8750). Here are some special needs:

- ✓ Hidden Pond Nature Center is looking for a Green Thumb to help with the gardens and landscaping. They are also looking for a Trail Boss, to help maintain miles of natural surface trails.
- ✓ Join the busy bees at Sully Historic Site and lend a hand with their many special events — a great way for youth volunteers to fulfill community service hours.
- ✓ Local haven Huntley Meadows is seeking a weekend Volunteer-on-Duty. VODs greet and assist visitors in enjoying the park, responding to questions and registering people for programs. You will be asked to work one five-hour shift per month to start (Saturday preferred).
- ✓ Riverbend Park's Wish List includes a Volunteer-on-Duty (VODs) for weekends and weekdays, and Program Leaders for weekdays.
- ✓ Huntley Meadows is also looking for a Herbarian Assistant to assist with maintaining herbarium specimens and documentation. Tasks may include field work, plant identification, specimen collection and preservation, record keeping and data entry.
- ✓ Cultural Resource Protection/Archaeology volunteers are needed for all sorts of new Virginia history and Civil War projects.

# BE OF GOOD SPIRITS

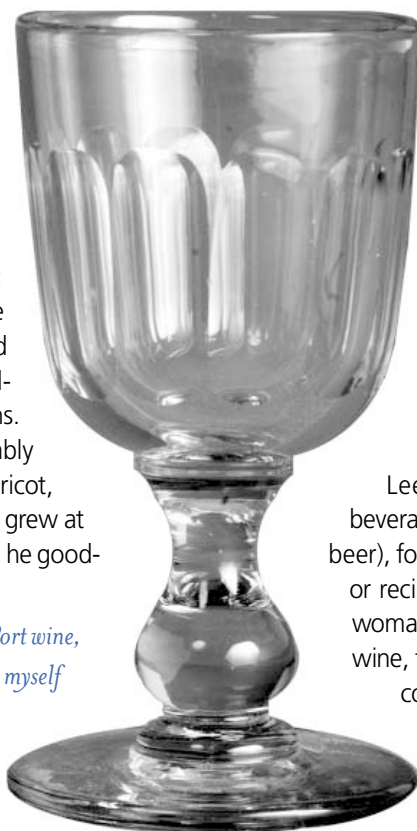
By Jeanne Niccolls, Manager, Historic Collections

In moderately wealthy and well-to-do American homes of the late 18th and early 19th centuries “spirits” (distilled whiskey brandy and rum), beer and cider, sherry and port, wines and punches, and other alcoholic beverages were important accompaniments to nearly every meal.

The letters of Richard Bland Lee (of Sully Historic Site in western Fairfax), give us insight into the importance of spirits in early America. Lee ordered casks of imported wines to be sent from Philadelphia to Sully by his brother-in-law, Zaccheus Collins. Lee also made his own cider, brandy and probably wines from fruit grown in his orchards. Cherry, apricot, plum, apple, peach and pear trees and grapevines grew at Sully. While awaiting a shipment of sherry and port, he good-naturedly chided Collins,

*“If you do not very soon send me the supply of sherry and Port wine, I shall consume all of the Nectar of the Gods which I made myself two years ago, an event I should be sorry for — as it would afford me pleasure to regale you with that celestial beverage.”*

He probably was referring to a fruit wine or brandy made from his own orchard produce. In 1801, it was noted that “there were 300 bearing Apple Trees of excellent quality for cyder... There has also been lately planted an orchard of 1200 Peach Trees.”



Wines and cordials were served in this panel-cut glass. American, circa 1820. Fairfax County Park Authority Collection.

In 1804, Richard Bland Lee wrote to Collins, “As our crops of fruit are very promising, procure for me a complete still of seventy or eighty gallons...a great difference exists as to the material of which the worm should be made. As you are a considerable chemist I beg you to select one of the least deleterious quality.” The products of his still were probably brandies. Lee may have also used the fruit to make wines, and later in the fall he reported “my cyder is very fine.”

Like most women of her time, Elizabeth Collins Lee was also responsible for preparing certain beverages for the table, especially “small beer” (a weak beer), for which Rebecca Tayloe Lee gave her a “receipt” or recipe. The making of sweet wines was also in the woman’s sphere. A favorite must have been blackberry wine, for which she had no less than four recipes in her cookbook, along with one for punch.

Across the county, William Moss raised apple and peach trees in his orchard at Green Spring. Some of this fruit may have been made into spirits, filling the three decanters and poured into the 22 wine glasses inventoried in his estate in 1835. His nearby neighbors, George Mason at Gunston Hall and George Washington at Mount Vernon, also had extensive orchards and gardens with grapevines.



Designed to hold liquids, these three jugs were ideal containers for spirits. American, circa 1880-1900. Fairfax County Park Authority Collection.

## Moonshine and the 18th Amendment

Throughout American history it was often illegal to manufacture or sell whiskey from an unlicensed, untaxed still. In 1919, the 18th amendment to the constitution prohibited the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes. In the woods around Great Falls, where farmers could take their corn to be ground at Colvin Run Mill, a cottage industry grew up. “Moonshine,” “white lightning” and “mountain dew” all refer to alcoholic beverages made in illegal stills set up in the backwoods and operated at night “by the shine of the moon.”

Though moonshining was considered a reprehensible activity by church-goers, Grange members, and Temperance supporters, for some individuals it was a means of support for the family during the Depression. The “Prohibition Era” ended in 1933, when the law was repealed and the making of spirits once again became a legitimate occupation.

Sources from the Fairfax County Park Authority Historic Archives:  
*Alexandria Advertiser* February 9, 1801, Alexandria Virginia Library  
 Letters of Richard Bland Lee, Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University  
 Daniel Parker Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Here are some recipes from the Elizabeth Collins Lee Family Cookbook, Arlington House Collection, National Park Service:

## PUNCH

1 gal of rum  
1 do of Brandy  
2 bottles of champagne  
3 pounds of Sugar  
8 lemons

Mix the Sugar with as much water as will cover it then add the lemons and spirit — Lastly just before using put in the champagne, and broken ice sufficient to weaken it — as much as you desire.

— 1861 Gales



Punch was served in large vessels like this porcelain Imari bowl. Japanese, 1875. Fairfax County Park Authority Collection

## BLACKBERRY WINE

Measure good berries & bruise them, to every gallon adding on a quart of boiling water. Let the mixture stand twenty four hours stirring occasionally; then strain off the liquid into a cask to every gallon adding 2 pounds of sugar. Cork tight and let stand until the following October and you will have wine ready for use without further stirring or boiling, that will make lips smack that never smacked under similar influence before. It may be improved and perhaps will keep better by adding a small quantity of pure French brandy.

— Mrs. Anderson 1868

## Celebrate the 244th Birthday of Richard Bland Lee

**SULLY HISTORIC SITE • Saturday, January 22nd**

Born January 20, 1761, Richard Bland Lee of Sully was one of the important political figures of his day. From the first Virginia House of Delegates to the first elected representative to Congress for northern Virginia, his political career was impressive. Join costumed characters in a toast to Mr. Lee, learn more about his illustrious kin and have birthday cake in the original 1794 kitchen outbuilding. Canceled if inclement weather. FREE, donations gratefully received. 703-437-1794

**SAVE THE DATE! APRIL 1, 2005**

**Drink Up! Liquid Refreshments in Early America, 1750 – 1850**

The variety of liquid refreshments available in early American homes, who drank what, when and where, and how they were processed or procured, stored and served is the focus of a symposium sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Authority and the History Department at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Presentations cover the technological, economic and social history associated with beverages in early American homes through topics such as the history of home and commercial beverage production, consumption patterns, imported beverages and trade, and containers in which beverages were stored, prepared and consumed. Interpretive activities, tabletop displays, and resource books for sale accompany the program. For information and registration call 703-631-1429.



## Difficult Times for Our Very Own Difficult Run Watershed

By Danielle Derwin, Stormwater Planning Division

*The Difficult Run watershed is the largest watershed in Fairfax County, with an area of just over 58 square miles. Featuring a diverse ecosystem, it is not only home to many species of fish and insects, but also a source of drinking water to many Fairfax County residents.*

Not too long ago, the sparkling waters of Difficult Run were clean enough to swim, play and fish in, but not anymore. Population growth and the development that goes with it have increased the polluted stormwater runoff that in turn degrades streams. It's no surprise then, that in some stretches of Fairfax County's Difficult Run watershed, streams have very low biologic integrity, which means, plain and simple, they're polluted and unhealthy.

*continued on page 8*

# Ellanor C. Lawrence Park's Top Ten

by Anthony Bulmer, Naturalist

*Fairfax County citizens are lucky indeed to have Ellanor C. Lawrence Park (ECLP). Nothing less than a lovely 660-acre idyll in western Fairfax, fascinating Ellanor C. Lawrence Park is a must-visit. There are nature trails featuring forests, streams, meadows, and Walney Pond (birding to boot!), along with historic buildings, gardens, and startling Civil War history. ECLP's busy and brainy staff of naturalists, historians and volunteers present a wide range of excellent interpretive programs and events. Here are ECLP's Top Ten.*

## 1 Excellent Programs for Everybody

ECLP has a rich diversity of natural and cultural resources which are reflected in its programs, events, and activities. Whether you enjoy learning about serpents, birding, the Civil War, beekeeping, historic buildings, the great outdoors, or earning a scout badge, there is a program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park for you.



## 2 Live Animal Exhibit

Live animal exhibits in the Walney Visitor Center provide a close-up view of local amphibians and reptiles. The animals provide endless entertainment for our young visitors, and adults find helpful information on the exhibit labels. This exhibit focuses on local species that can be found in our own backyards and stream valleys. The exhibit helps to familiarize residents with our local animals and the important roles they play in the environment. For example, you can learn about harmless garden snakes that contribute to the environment by eating pests and rodents.

ECLP's staff receives hundreds of calls and questions per year on wildlife issues ranging from worries about snakes to how to help an abandoned baby bird.



## 3 Unsolved Mysteries (even a Time Capsule)

The charming Walney Visitor Center was a farmhouse built about 1780. A keystone was found above a door, but the origin, date and carver all remain a mystery. Read the theories and decide for yourself. You can even see items from an 1875 Time Capsule, placed in a wall by former resident James Machen. Today, the Walney Visitor Center features the live animal exhibit, historic exhibits, information desk, store (with gifts for children and adults), and a classroom. The Center hosts 30,000 visitors a year.

## 4 Awesome Events

Catch a glimpse of the past! The annual fall program, War Comes to Walney, attracts hundreds of visitors who watch re-enactors perform Civil War military drills and firing demonstrations. Shoot a bow and arrow and observe tool-making during Indians of Centreville, also in the fall. At the June Honey Harvest, you can enjoy a taste of comb honey from the Walney beehives. ECLP is also one of four area parks featuring the free Arts in the Parks entertainment series during summer, every Saturday morning from June through August.



## 5 Take a Walk Through Time

The property boundaries haven't changed since the 1760s! At ECLP, you can walk through a window to the past and experience a unique, authentic, cultural landscape of houses, out-buildings, and a historic mill with numerous archaeological features. The remains of an ice house and a spring house, the rebuilt smoke-house, and even the stone farmhouse all give clues to the farm's past.



## 6 The Civil War and Boston Corbett

ECLP's talented staffers provide interpretation of the Civil War in western Fairfax County. From daily troop movements on Walney Road, encampments on the property, and the pillaging of Walney by Union soldiers, the Civil War left its mark on the land. Learn how Boston Corbett was captured by Mosby's Rangers in June 1864 on the Walney farm. Then, less than a year later, he allegedly shot and killed John Wilkes Booth! At ECLP, you can travel where so many have traveled before. Visit the Walney Visitor Center historic exhibits and learn why these events caused the Machen family to flee to Baltimore.

## 7 Turtle Trap

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park conducts a variety of field surveys. These valuable surveys provide a natural inventory of plants and animals, so that population, habitat and health can be assessed by staff and volunteers. One example is a floating trap on Walney Pond that water turtles climb on to sun, fall into, and then are inventoried and released unharmed.

## 8 Nature Immersion

ECLP features trails, gazebos, fields, and meadows that give you, your friends and family the opportunity to experience the joy of nature all around you.



The Walney Visitor Center

## 9 Intrepid, Creative Volunteers

Teens to 20-somethings, families to retirees — ECLP loves its volunteers and its volunteers love ECLP right back. Join this incredible team and get up close and personal with local wildlife and Virginia heritage. ECLP is always looking for volunteers to assist with snake boards, floating turtle traps, bluebird boxes, and flying squirrel boxes. History volunteers are needed for interpretation and special events.

**To Volunteer at  
Ellanor C. Lawrence Park,  
call 703-324-8750.**



## 10 Beauty

All year long, beauty abounds! In the spring, see blue bells, spring beauties, violets and phlox. In late summer and early fall, the fields and meadows are filled with goldenrod, asters and black-eyed Susans. Sign up for one of our wildflower walks and see the beauty that blankets Ellanor C. Lawrence Park. ECLP is also a great place to watch birds and is a stop on the Virginia Coastal Birding Trail. Visit the website ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl)) to see the bird and plant listings.



### DIRECTIONS TO ELLANOR C. LAWRENCE PARK

From the Washington Beltway: Take Route 66 West (Exit 49 off the Beltway). Follow Route 66 for 11 miles to Exit 53B, which is Route 28 north (Sully Road). From Route 28, make an immediate right onto Walney Road. The Walney Visitor Center is one mile up on the left. Be aware that the park extends on both sides of Route 28 and Walney Road, so it's best to stop at the Walney Visitor Center first.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call ECLP directly at **703-631-0013** TTY **703-324-3988**, or visit [fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ecl). You can also learn about ECLP's programs and activities in [Parktakes](#).

Learn how your company or employer can support the parks  
at [www.fairfaxcountyparkfoundation.com](http://www.fairfaxcountyparkfoundation.com)

**Difficult Run** continued from page 5

*Land and water are intimately connected. Whenever snow melts or it rains, the fertilizer on your yard, the oil leaking from under your car, the trash in the road, and the pet waste left in a yard will all find their way into our neighborhood streams.*



Captain Hickory Branch, a tributary to Difficult Run, is close to the confluence with the Potomac River (1999). Captain Hickory represents an area of Difficult Run with high biologic integrity resulting from the low level of development in its headwaters. (Photo/Fairfax County)

## Working Together to Restore Difficult Run's Beauty and Health

Citizens are becoming increasingly involved with watershed health and related issues. Fairfax County is currently working with a group of residents who are members of a County-led steering committee to develop a watershed management plan for the Difficult Run watershed.

"In the four years that I've worked at the Reston Association, I've noticed changes in the streams," says Diana Saccone, watershed manager for the Reston Association. "I now see deeper and wider stream channels, increased sedimentation, and a real decline in water quality in the lakes."

Today, high levels of fecal coliform from human and animal waste make all streams in Difficult Run prohibitive for recreational uses. Fecal coliform isn't the only contaminant in the streams. Cigarette butts, soda bottles, washing machines, and car parts are just a few examples of the trash that ends up in waterways, making the streams uninhabitable for fish and insects.

In some cases, streams are eroding — widening or deepening due to the increased volume and velocity of water created by a combination of rain or snow melt and impervious surfaces such as roads, parking lots and buildings. "Many streams today are trying to accommodate the increase of flow by downcutting into the stream bed," says Fred Rose, Stormwater Planning Division branch chief. "Very steep banks can become dangerous for people and wildlife."

Despite the environmental challenges that many streams face — flooding, stream bank erosion, polluted runoff, and litter — Difficult Run is home to 29 different species of fish and a myriad of benthic macroinvertebrates (insects that live on the bottom of the stream). Together, residents and Fairfax County staff can work to improve the quality of streams.

In addition to Difficult Run, the County is also working with residents to develop management plans for all 30 of its watersheds that empty into the Potomac River or the Occoquan River and into the Chesapeake Bay.

## What You Can Do to Help

Fairfax County residents can improve the quality of streams by using native plants to create a buffer around streams; fertilizing properly with the correct amount and only when necessary; properly disposing of pet waste; making sure that only rain goes down storm drains; and properly maintaining cars, so they don't leak oil or other fluids.

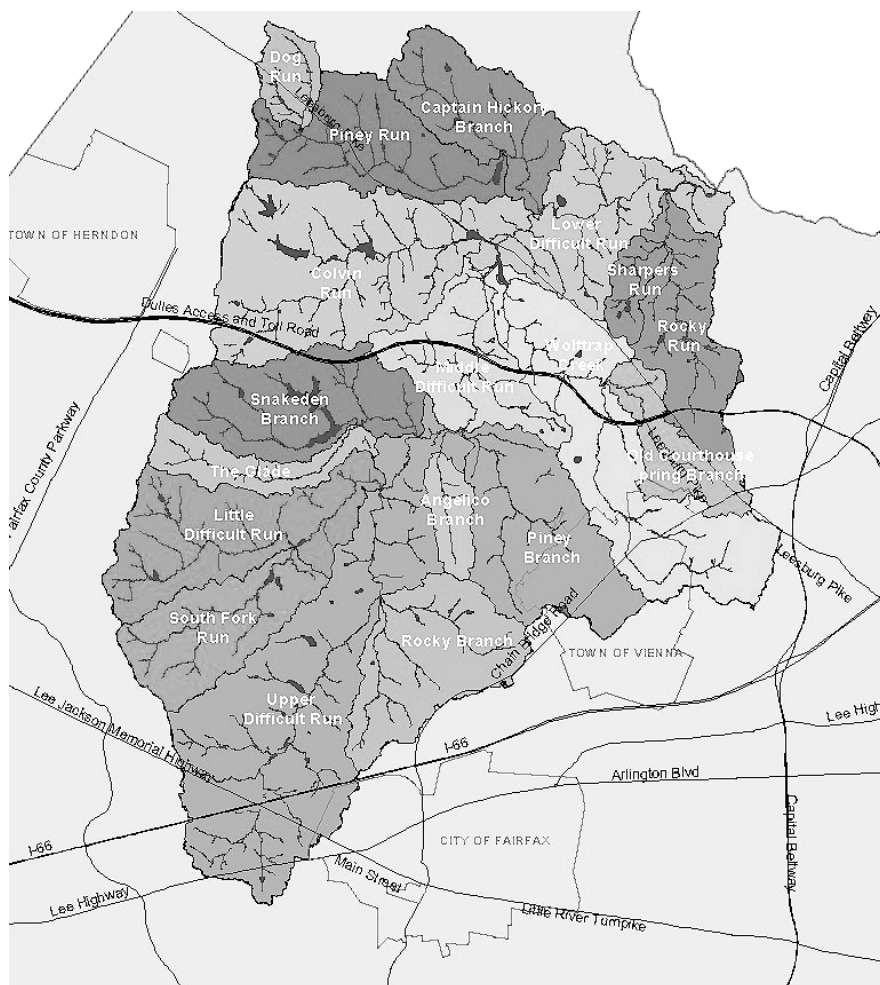
Join one of the groups of residents (or start a group in your neighborhood) that are taking active steps toward improving the water quality of the streams through organized efforts. By volunteering a few hours for stream monitoring, stream clean-up events, or even stenciling your neighborhood storm drains, every person can make a difference to restore our streams. Learn more or get involved by visiting [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/stormwater) (check out the Calendar of Events), and [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/watersheds), or by calling 703-324-5500, TTY 711.

*Watershed management plans are administered by the Stormwater Planning Division of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.*

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Eroded bank on Angelico Branch of Difficult Run (2001). This extreme example of erosion demonstrates what can happen to a stream when the volume and velocity of the water traveling through the channel increases beyond what the stream can handle. Not only is this unsightly, it is dangerous as the banks are very unstable. (Photo/Fairfax County)



The Difficult Run watershed is the area of land from Great Falls to the City of Fairfax and from Tysons Corner to Herndon, including Reston, Fair Oaks, and part of Vienna. If you work, play, or live in these areas, you impact the Difficult Run watershed.

## Business Partnership for Stream Restoration

By Meghan Fellows, Naturalist

**O**n October 27th, as part of Dominion Power's Environmental Stewardship Volunteer Workday program, about 40 volunteers joined forces to assist in stream restoration in Americana Park (off of Little River Turnpike and the Beltway). The stream restoration had two primary goals: (1) increase stream bank stabilization and (2) increase trout habitat.

Several techniques were employed to stabilize the stream banks, which were showing signs of rapid deterioration. Root waddles (large root balls positioned perpendicular to the bank) were used to deflect powerful stormwater from a particularly vulnerable bend in the bank. Several tons of rock, tree trunks and soil were used to hold the root waddles in place. A crib of several logs held together with rebar and cable was constructed on the lee side of the root waddle to encourage sediment deposition and the formation of a more gradual slope. On the opposite bank, over 70 cedar trees were brought in and cabled to the bank to encourage sediment deposition.

In addition, invasive, non-native plants were removed from an area near the stream restoration site. Primary non-natives that were removed were winged euonymus or burning bush, privet, and multiflora rose. Whole plants were removed including the root crowns and several inches of root to discourage resprouting. No herbicides were used.

## Starry Nights *continued from page 1*

By mid-January Orion is high in the south at 9 pm. A line drawn through the three stars in his belt extended to the east points toward Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, only 8.8 light years away. If we extend that line to the west, it points roughly to the reddish star Aldebaran (the brightest star in the Taurus constellation) and further still to the seven sisters of the Pleiades, a well-known faint but delicately beautiful small cluster of stars. Ancient Mayan lore speaks of the Pleiades as a homeland. The Japanese call the cluster Subaru.

By mid-February these stars will have moved into the southwest. However, if you look straight up (see why you need the lounge chair?), you now find Castor and Pollux and their companion Saturn. Just a short distance to the southeast, you can find with your binoculars the cluster of stars known as the *beehive*. The beehive is a faint swarm of stars; about 60 of which are just visible to the naked eye under the best conditions, but no longer in our area due to light pollution.

The night sky is still an important resource. Astronomers must build their telescopes on some of the highest, most remote mountains on earth to get away from light pollution. They study the heavens to try to come to an understanding of the very beginnings of the universe, and perhaps its fate. To watch the heavenly bodies and understand their motions, the phases of the moon, the motion of the earth — is to truly feel the earth move under your feet. However, to experience this, we do have to actually see the stars.

### Do you think night skies are a natural resource?

Email ResOURces at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/rmd-feedback.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/rmd-feedback.htm) and let us know. Read more about it in our Spring issue.

### STARGAZING RESOURCES

[www.scitechresources.gov](http://www.scitechresources.gov)

[www.astronomy.com/](http://www.astronomy.com/)

<http://skyandtelescope.com/>

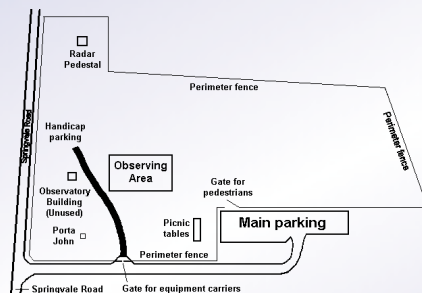
Also, cleaner air and less light pollution mean brighter stars. Go to [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org), The International Dark Sky Association, or [www.cleanairpartners.net](http://www.cleanairpartners.net) to learn more.

### Introducing Observatory Park in Great Falls

Thanks to the vision of Charles Olin of the Analemma Society, in partnership with the Park Authority, Fairfax County residents can join fellow telescope-toting star-lovers at Observatory Park in Great Falls. Viewings are on Friday nights after sunset (weather permitting). Learn all about their education programs, ongoing development projects and special events by visiting [www.analemma.org](http://www.analemma.org).

### Directions to Observatory Park

The park is located in Great Falls, VA, at the corner of Springvale Road and Georgetown Pike (Rt. #193). The main parking lot is off of Springvale Road, on the south side of the park.



## The Green Spring Horticultural Library

By Becky Super, Green Spring Gardens Park

Winter is here and the gardens are resting, but one can still dream of spring. It's easy at the Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Library. With over 2,300 books on every gardening topic, dozens of catalogs and magazines, the possibilities are endless.

The library is a non-circulating reference library open Monday–Saturday from 9 am until 4:30 pm and Sundays from noon until 4:30 pm. When the gray days of winter make you long for spring, curl up with a few of our favorite books:

*The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*  
by Rick Darke

*The Well Tended Perennial Garden*  
by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

*The American Horticulture Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*  
Edited by Christopher Brickell

*Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*  
by Michael Dirr

*Garden Masterclass* by John Brookes

*The New York/ Mid-Atlantic Gardner's Book of Lists* by Bonnie Lee Appleton

*The American Horticulture Society Pruning & Training* Edited by Christopher Brickell

*The American Horticulture Society Plant Propagation* Edited by Alan Toogood

For children, the library has an entire section dedicated to the next generation of gardeners. Here are a few of our favorites.

*The Gardening Book* by Jane Bull

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

*Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf* by Lois Ehlert

*One Small Square Series* by Donald Silver

*Alison's Zinnia* by Anita Label

*The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart

*How Groundhog's Garden Grew*  
by Lynne Cherry

*Backyard Detective*  
by Nic Bishop

Come dream  
of spring with  
a good book.



# SULLY PLANTATION'S TRUMBULL ENGRAVINGS

by Elizabeth Judd

The sharp-eyed visitor to the Sully Plantation House will have noticed two 18th-century engravings hanging in the first floor hallway. The pictures are *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, 17 June 1775* and *The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, 31 December 1775*, by John Trumbull.

These engravings, and the paintings from which they were copied, were something new and rather special at the time of their execution, representing the first documentation by an American artist of the significant events of the American Revolution. For this era, documentation was not about historical exactness. *Bunker's Hill* and *Quebec* were not intended to be eyewitness accounts of the battles or the deaths of the generals. The type of truth Trumbull and his fellow artists sought was a moral and aesthetic truth, which appealed to the intellect and emotions of the people of the time. Factual details could be marshaled to serve this vision, but by themselves were not important. What was new in Trumbull's style was that he portrayed his heroes in contemporary military dress, used life likenesses whenever possible and the actual topography of the battlefield, rather than backgrounds copied from classical models. For the time, these were startling innovations.

Trumbull intended the engravings to be the first in a subscription series of 13, all based on original paintings of key events in the Revolution. In the eyes of his contemporaries, he was uniquely qualified to undertake this project. In addition to his obvious talent, he was a gentleman, son of the governor of Connecticut, had been well educated at Harvard, had witnessed many of the events he



*The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, 31 December 1775.*

was planning to depict and was familiar with the terrain of the battlefields. He also knew personally many of the participants, having participated himself in various military and civilian capacities, most notably as one of General Washington's aides-de-camp. He had the sponsorship of influential men like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and his artistic mentor, Benjamin West.

Trumbull had completed the paintings of *Bunker's Hill* and *Quebec* by July of 1786, but it took almost two years to locate an engraver capable of delivering the quality of work Trumbull demanded and he had to go to Stuttgart, Germany, to find him. Given the complexities of the engraving process, in which different parts of the plate were painstakingly worked by different people, and close collaboration was required between engravers, etchers, printers and artist (who frequently happened to work in different countries), the finished engravings were not published until 1798. In addition to technical delays, there were delays due to Trumbull's involvement in business ventures and diplomatic missions.

Trumbull had first announced his intention to paint and publish the engravings on January 23, 1790 in *The Gazette of the United States*. On April 5, 1790, subscriptions began to come in and the list of subscribers included President Washington, Vice President John Adams, Secretary of War Henry Knox, a number of senators and representatives and the governor of New York, George Clinton. A receipt dated April 17, 1790 documents that while attending Congress in New York City, Richard Bland Lee also bought a subscription to *Bunker's Hill* and *Quebec*, though because of the delay in publication, the final prints were most probably delivered to him at Sully some eight years later.



*The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, 17 June 1775.*

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[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources.htm)

## WELCOME TO ResOURCES ONLINE

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources)

Our newly renovated website, representing the Resource Management Division (RMD) of the Park Authority and ResOURCES newsletter, is now online and ready for you.

On the website, you can learn more about RMD's work to protect, preserve and interpret Fairfax County's natural and cultural heritage. You can **Visit the Sites** to see the county's beautiful nature centers and historical sites, or stop by the charming **Rental Properties** to plan your next special event. One of our many new features is **Who Do You Call?** for concerns about encroachment, wildlife, county artifacts and more. In **Nature Finder**, find out where to see county birds and flora, visit the **Wildflowers**, or check the **Almanac** for natural and astronomical events. Past issues are available for ResOURCES newsletter, along with dozens of articles about county nature, history and horticulture in the **Articles Index**.

## Celebrate African-American History Month

SULLY HISTORIC SITE

Daily, February 2-28,  
except Tuesdays, 11:00 am-4:00 pm

See a special exhibit focusing on the archaeological collection and information on the Sully slave quarter. Tours will highlight the daily lives of the enslaved population at Sully 200 years ago. \$5/adult, \$4/student, \$3 senior and child. **703-437-1794**

Sully Historic Site is now a member of the National Underground Railroad, Network to Freedom, as named by the National Park Service. Sully was built in 1794 by Richard Bland Lee, Northern Virginia's first representative to Congress.

## Farm Animal Babies

KIDWELL FARM  
at FRYING PAN PARK

Sheep, pigs, goats and cows deliver babies during late winter and early spring. January through April is the busiest time. Stop by often to visit the new arrivals.



Visit the park's website  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fpp)  
or call **703-437-9101**  
for birth updates.

## Swamp Love

HIDDEN POND NATURE CENTER  
Monday, February 14th,  
3:30-5 pm

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a critter's chorus of love songs at Hidden Pond when the wood frog returns to the park's wetlands. Adults and children alike are awed and amazed at the sight of so many hot blooded — err, cold blooded — frogs and other amphibians out and about as they call for their mates. Program includes a slide show. Canceled if rain. Reservations required. \$3/person. **703-451-9588**



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